



LEEDS RHINOS FOUNDATION

CHARITY NO. 1112580

BEST FOUNDATION AMBITION 2024 TO 2030



OUR MAJOR SUPPORTERS



Summary

Established in 2005 we have grown to become a well-respected charity delivering projects in the heart of communities that provide opportunities, raise aspirations and enable people to be the best they can be.

The purpose of Leeds Rhinos Foundation is to **change lives through the power of sport.**

This document sets out our strategic ambition, our values and who we are. It describes our approaches to achieve our purpose, including assessing progress and impact. Crucially, it is illustrated with quotes, testimonials and images that help tell our story of changing lives through the power of sport as evidence of delivery that gives us confidence for the future.

“Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than governments in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all types of discrimination.” Nelson Mandela. 2000

Everyone involved with the Foundation strives to embody these inspiring words daily, using the power of sport to change lives.

“My son has been involved with the learning disability super league team run by the Foundation for 6 years. He has grown in confidence beyond my wildest expectations, made new friends and developed his independence considerably. He really feels a part of the Rhinos family, and what a wonderfully inclusive family it is!”

Sharon Woodham, mother of Mitch Woodham, 25 years old.





Foreword: Mariana Pexton, Chair

As the first female Chair of the Foundation, I am immensely proud to lead an excellent organisation that works tirelessly to remove barriers and helps people be their best. Since becoming a Trustee in 2015, I have witnessed genuine passion, relentless energy and constant professionalism from staff and volunteers on delivery, and trustees through their governance role. Thank you to everyone for their contribution to the Team Rhinos impact.

We're using this document to be clear about our strategic ambition for the rest of the decade, linked to the overall Best City Ambition for Leeds, with Rhinos being an exemplary partner in the Team Leeds way of working. This longer-term ambition will inform our annual finance and business planning and be reviewed periodically recognising the unprecedented dynamic and uncertain context we are operating in globally and nationally.

Each year, we've seen exciting growth in the breadth and depth of what we do to change lives through the power of sport, providing a ever widening range of activities for the very young to those much older. We take pride from being an inclusive organisation at the forefront of challenging boundaries, for example delivering sport development for all abilities across all areas of the city and beyond, providing alternative curriculum opportunities, rheumatoid arthritis support, obesity programmes and working with offenders in prisons – to name a few.

We are ambitious to do even more to change lives through the power of sport, to impact on the lives of more people, particularly to tackle poverty and inequality in areas such as health and wellbeing, education and employment, crime and violence, so that everyone can fulfil their potential. We are driven to work with those who face the toughest challenges.



We deliver our purpose by focusing on our values:

1. **TRUST.** We aspire to be trusted by everyone we work with to deliver excellence.
2. **ENJOYMENT.** We look to create a positive environment to inspire everyone we work with.
3. **PROGRESSIVE.** We are forward thinking and innovative.
4. **INCLUSIVE.** We treat everyone fairly, with dignity and do not discriminate.

We have recently refreshed our governance arrangements, in line with best practice, including a focus on having a diverse board with the right skills and experience and increasingly reflecting the communities we serve. We're in a strong position, with excellent trustees, but not complacent and always striving for improvement and innovation.

Post-pandemic and global events all impacting local communities, too many people in the city face many and varied challenges. The Foundation is continually willing to innovate and collaborate to deliver more and different programmes with communities, particularly those that will have the biggest impact on today and tomorrow's societal challenges, even though we don't know what some of those challenges may be.

We look forward to enhancing existing partnerships and building new collaborative relationships to deliver our strategic ambition.

Introduction

We are the official charity of Leeds Rhinos and benefit immensely from the unwavering support they provide us which enhances our efficiency and impact.

Whilst we are governed independently of the Club, in line with the Charity Code, we align ourselves with a joint purpose across the Rhinos family, based on nearly thirty years of the Rhinos ethos, champions on and off the pitch.

Our strategic ambition has interrelated approaches that describe our way of working to deliver impact, deliberately drawing on the now famous Leeds Rhinos Number 7 that so brilliantly demonstrates the values of the Foundation, Club and the city.

The number 7 has tremendous relevance for everyone connected to the Leeds Rhinos. Since 2019 we have admired, and been inspired, by the way Rob Burrow CBE has responded to his motor neurone disease diagnosis.

We hope our seven approaches make Rob proud of the charity that belongs to the only professional club he ever played for in his illustrious career, where Rob Burrow's incredible legacy continues to have a positive impact every day.

Along with our values, these interrelated approaches drive how we do business to have the maximum effect, with the next section describing each of these in turn with a focus on current delivery and our future.

1. Power
2. Place
3. People
4. Products
5. Partnerships
6. Performance
7. Possibilities





POWER

The power of sport means so much more than just participation. It's how we engage those who wouldn't see themselves as a sportsperson. It is at the heart of what we do, evidence suggests it works and can tackle some of the most challenging issues in our society, whether that is health inequalities, social deprivation, criminality, isolation, exclusion or hate. Participation can also provide inspiration and positivity for members of our communities - both young and old, newcomers, the isolated, those lacking in confidence, at risk of offending and those most often ignored.

"For me, sports teachers, coaches and leaders are some of the most important people in our society. With dignity they provide leadership, integrity, develop teamwork, and manage the challenge of dealing with both triumph and tribulation. When the Foundation offered me the opportunity to prove that disability had not stolen sport from my life with the physical disability rugby league offer, it gave me new pathways to give back to my community through the power of sport. As a player, then coach in this game I loved, I was able to be a role model and inspire other young disabled people to take up the opportunity and get involved. Sport is a positive way to empower and encourage all to be better, add in the Leeds Rhinos supporting and actively encouraging inclusivity it opens doors to huge opportunities for ALL to be part of something bigger."

Simon Brown PDRL Coach/Player

PLACE

We're lucky to call our iconic stadium in the heart of Headingley home, given the incredible occasions in its rich past, even hosting Calcutta Cup and FA Cup finals alongside many epic games of rugby league. More recently hosting the inaugural Rob Burrow Leeds Marathon with over 12,000 people taking part. It is also home to most of our projects. It welcomes female asylum seekers and refugees who have fled horrendous situations and now receive our support with English lessons and career advice. Dementia, Parkinson's, Rheumatoid arthritis, and Cancer services are all facilitated here. Education programmes to assist young people back into mainstream school, mental health workshops to assist people to talk about their problems and a unique community hub in the south stand allowing many people to enjoy the fantastic game day spectacle, people who for many valid reasons see many barriers to attending, yet we break those barriers down and open their world to a wonderful sport.

Staging the inaugural 2023 Rob Burrow CBE Leeds Marathon at Headingley stadium was yet again another reminder of the power of this location which had such a big impact on me. Its history is littered with so many fantastic games and events yet away from the pitch it inspires so many. Through the work of the Leeds Rhinos Foundation the stadium is the hub from which they extend out to the rest of the city, and beyond, offering opportunities for some of the most disadvantaged and disconnected in our communities. A theatre to engage, inspire and transform!

Kevin Sinfield CBE
Honorary Vice-President
Leeds Rhinos Foundation





PEOPLE

The Foundation has a team of fantastic, committed staff, volunteers, and board of trustees who all work closely with our colleagues in the Rhinos club, which places a huge value on the role of the Foundation to ensure it is at the heart of communities and delivering social impact. Adding in the rich mix of our players and support staff, from the many different Rhinos teams, and you collectively have one amazing and inspiring team who want to improve the lives of as many people as possible. That's what we mean by Team Rhinos. Key issues for our staffing team are having the right people in the right place with the right skills, so ensuring we can recruit, retain, and develop our staff is key to delivering the right organisational culture.

"When we took ownership of the Leeds Rhinos in 1996 one of our four objectives was to be more connected with the city of Leeds and beyond. To make an even bigger impact, we formed the Foundation in 2005. To see the work that the Foundation is now doing is quite remarkable, so many people benefiting from the breadth of their services. But we always want to do more, so we continue to support the Foundation to enable sport to positively benefit people's lives".

Gary Hetherington, CEO Leeds Rhinos, Life President LRF
Paul Caddick, Chair Leeds Rhinos

PRODUCTS

The Foundation offers an ever-expanding set of services, projects and collaborations that create opportunities. Whilst our origins are in rugby league, we are so much more having been innovative and bold and expanded the range of what we do to help everyone be their best. Our original pillars of Sport, Health, Education, Arts and Heritage provided the solid basis of our current range of projects and services that have had a positive impact on so many people. We will continue to deliver products that are evidence based and innovative to open different opportunities to engage in new ways to assist with the many challenges in society. We are one of the reliable 'go to' organisations in Leeds and the wider region, based on near twenty years of an enthusiastic willingness to collaborate and problem solve.





PARTNERSHIPS

Partnership working is hard, and so it should be, because when you get it right it results in magic happening and a positive impact in communities. Building purposeful and collaborative relationships is rewarding and needed more than ever with the pressures on families, communities and many organisations being greater than ever, both in and beyond the city. We will continue to develop partnerships that deliver engaging, value for money and highly effective results that really make a difference to those who need it most. This might be with schools or other education settings, health organisations, charities, clubs or businesses. Campaigns that confront toxic masculinity, hate, discrimination and injustice are those that we will champion with all our energy and commitment, as well as addressing pitch-side behaviour.

"It is fantastic to be able to collaborate on projects with the Leeds Rhinos Foundation, especially those tackling violence against women and girls, that will make our communities safer and help residents to thrive. Partnership working is powerful. By drawing upon our collective resources and expertise, we can drive forward positive change for the people of West Yorkshire."

Tracy Brabin, Mayor of West Yorkshire

PERFORMANCE

The highly effective and passionate board of trustees will continue to provide rigorous and vigorous challenge to the senior management team providing governance of the highest standard. The ultimate test of success will be when the need to prioritise certain areas reduces! Whilst on that journey we will aim to grow turnover and impact year on year, and ensuring financial resilience, resulting in more delivery and engagement with communities. City priorities such as supporting the poorest to improve their health the fastest, contributing to the big ideas in the Inclusive Growth Strategy, and supporting delivery of the Child Friendly wishes are key drivers of our performance and our possibilities. Qualitative and quantitative measures will continue to be used to assess impact and report progress through our annual report and accounts. Collaborative benchmarking will continue to be a feature of our development as part of our approach to learning from others.

"The thing that impresses me most about the Foundation is how they embed the Best City ambition to tackle poverty and inequality into everything they do. They were early ambassadors of our Child Friendly Leeds agenda and now deliver many projects that help address our most pressing challenges, such as health inequalities, youth activities, isolation and inclusive growth. Looking to the future we are confident that the Foundation will support the city's ambitions through their collaborative and innovative approach using the power of sport to change lives".

Councillor James Lewis
Leader, Leeds City Council





POSSIBILITIES

Our track record on delivery and impact means we can be bold and innovative in order to fulfil our purpose of using the power of sport to change lives. In line with our values, we are a progressive charity, and our journey thus far shows strong evidence of this. As we head into this next period of our development, towards the end of the decade, here are just some of the major developments we are aiming to undertake or contribute to:

1. We will continue to align ourselves with the local authority's future ambitions for the city and as we consider how we might become a community anchor organisation.
2. We will aim for every child of school age to have experienced a positive interaction with the Leeds Rhinos Foundation.
3. We will use the Leeds 2023 year of culture as a platform to further embed sport and physical recreation into the cultural ambitions of the city.
4. We will target sustainable, and ambitious but realistic, financial growth of the Foundation increasing our resources to deliver more services to the benefit of people who need it.
5. We will continue to develop more strategic partnerships to broaden the sport offer, increasing engagement, and specifically targeting running, rowing, basketball and walking based activities.
6. We will use our brand, profile and capability to work with others to assist the creation of physical sporting assets including indoor facilities.
7. We will continue to focus heavily on the promotion and engagement of women and girls into sport and physical activity, through netball and other opportunities.
8. We will offer more projects and services, working with partners, to reduce health inequalities, reduce violence against women and girls, reduce the number of young people who end up not in education employment or training, and reduce the prevalence of male youth violence.
9. We will broaden and deepen our geographic base and reach, in Leeds and the wider region, targeting those communities most in need.
10. We will work tirelessly to reduce the impact that poverty has upon our communities through our activities and our influence.

MY CITY, EVERYONE'S FOUNDATION: Bob Bowman QPM

I love my City Leeds which has provided me with so much and as the proud Chief Executive leading the Leeds Rhinos Foundation I, and my team will give 100% of our energy so that as many people as possible can access opportunities such as I had to help improve their lives.

Born and raised on a Leeds council estate by my loving, supportive and inspiring working-class parents I soon realised how fortunate I was and that many people in wider society were struggling. Subsequently, becoming a career police officer in Leeds I witnessed firsthand the effects of poverty, isolation, loneliness, lack of self-esteem and the adverse results of being often overlooked. These issues require a lot of non-traditional interventions, partnership working and collaboration.

I have always loved sport, especially rugby, both codes, and have seen the positive impact it has on people's lives. No surprise then that encouraging people to watch sport, take part in sport and be more physically active were major contributors during my service in preventing crime, anti-social behaviour and keeping young people engaged in the education system. Leeds Rhinos were tremendous supporters of this work which opened the door to my near twenty-year association with what is now the Leeds Rhinos Foundation.

Leaving the Police in 2016 I embarked upon a journey of leading our charity in partnership with the Club and setting our sights on becoming a much larger organisation in size, much broader in reach, and with much deeper impact.

Currently we are faced with rising concerns over issues such as violence against women and girls, serious male youth violence (knife crime), persistent school absence, hate incidents, and health inequalities to name a few, never has the need for us to deliver on our purpose to change lives through the power of sport been more needed.

I wake up each morning as a keen activist, in the sense that I and the Foundation team want to be a part of a solution to the current challenges our society faces and we will be extremely proactive in using our purpose, values and our 7P's as approaches to do this.

Our strategic ambition and direction set out in this document will be reviewed annually, especially in conjunction with our key partners, making sure we are contributing effectively to our city's ambitious journey as a collaborative endeavour.

I hope you have been both informed by what we have done and inspired by our ambition and commitment. I will conclude with a quote that has inspired me since a teenager and accurately covers what the Leeds Rhinos means when we say that what we are about is providing opportunities:

"We are all better than we know. If only we can be brought to realise this, we may never be prepared to settle for anything less". (Kurt Hahn, Founder of the Outward Bound schools of adventure).





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